

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4466

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS, 12/31/79

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: RESTRUCTURING OF MINISTERIAL COUNCIL DEBATES: MISSION  
COMMENTS ON LUNS PROPOSALS

REF: USNATO 4450

SUMMARY: SYG LUNS HAS CIRCULATED PROPOSALS (REFTEL) FOR REORGANIZING  
DEBATE AT MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETINGS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL.  
THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE AND REVIEWS POSSIBLE  
FORMATS FOR MINISTERIAL DISCUSSIONS. LUNS' THREE ALTERNATIVES ARE:  
(1) THE PRESENT FORMAT OF COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENTS; (2) SHORT INTER-  
VENTIONS FOCUSED ON INDIVIDUAL AGENDA ITEMS; OR (3) A COMBINATION  
OF COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENTS AND GENERAL DEBATE. LUNS' PAPER PROVIDES  
A RARE AND TIMELY OPPORTUNITY FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER TO RE-SHAPE  
THE PATTERN OF COUNCIL  
MINISTERIALS TO CONFORM TO HIS PREFERENCES.  
ACTION REQUESTED: SECRETARY'S GUIDANCE ON FORMAT OF NAC MINISTERIAL.  
END SUMMARY.

1. PRESENT FORMAT. AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL NAC MINISTERIAL MEETINGS,  
DISCUSSIONS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN CONDUCTED ALONG THE FOLLOWING  
LINES:  
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FIRST DAY: MORNING AND AFTERNOON SESSIONS DEVOTED TO A SERIES  
OF GENERAL STATEMENTS BY EACH MINISTER. COMMUNIQUE DRAFTING  
COMMITTEE (MADE UP OF DCM'S FROM NATO DELEGATIONS) CONVENES  
IN EVENING AND USUALLY CONTINUES WORK UNTIL THE EARLY MORNING

HOURS OF THE FOLLOWING DAY.

SECOND DAY: MORNING SESSION DEVOTED TO RESOLVING POINTS OF DIFFERENCE IN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE. MEETING ENDS WHEN COMMUNIQUE APPROVED. MINISTERS PREFER TO END THE MEETING WITH THE MORNING SESSION AND, IF POSSIBLE, NOT MEET IN THE AFTERNOON.

2. LUNS CLEARLY AND FRANKLY IDENTIFIES THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS FORMAT: DISCUSSIONS DO NOT ALWAYS LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT MINISTERS ARE ENGAGED IN AN IMPORTANT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND A STIMULATING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, AND SOMETIMES FAIL TO PRODUCE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION. MOST OF THE TIME OF THE MEETING

IS TAKEN UP BY EACH MINISTER READING A SINGLE COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT COVERING MOST OR ALL OF THE SUBJECTS ON THE MINISTERIAL AGENDA. THE FACT THAT THE ENTIRE FIRST DAY OF MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IS DEVOTED TO THESE SOMETIMES LENGTHY INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTES TO THE SET-PIECE ATMOSPHERE.

3. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS GIVEN, HOWEVER, IN ADDITION TO THOSE LISTED BY LUNS, WHY MINISTERS DEVOTE SO MUCH TIME PRESENTING THESE OPENING STATEMENTS. FOR SOME GOVERNMENTS THESE STATEMENTS REPRESENT A DELICATE COMPROMISE BETWEEN COALITION PARTNERS AND MINISTERS HAVE LITTLE FLEXIBILITY IN DEVIATING FROM THEM. SOME MINISTERS USE THESE STATEMENTS AS COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THEIR OWN BUREAUCRACIES AND TO NATO. MINISTERS WHO ARE NOT FLUENT IN EITHER ENGLISH OR FRENCH FEEL MORE SECURE GIVING A PREPARED STATEMENT THAN THEY WOULD IN GIVE-AND-TAKE DEBATE. SOME SMALLER ALLIES FEEL THAT THIS FORMAT GIVES THEM THEIR DAY IN COURT, AND THAT THEY MIGHT BE ENTIRELY OVERSHADOWED BY THE LARGER POWERS WERE THERE TO BE ONLY UNSTRUCTURED DISCUSSION.

4. SHORT INTERVENTIONS. LUNS APPEARS TO FAVOR SUBMISSION BUT NOT PRESENTATION OF FORMAL STATEMENTS AND SHORT INTERVENTIONS FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THIS LESS STRUCTURED FORMAT COULD ENHANCE THE SPONTANEITY OF CONFIDENTIAL

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NATO MINISTERIALS. HOWEVER, FOR THE REASONS ABOVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ALL THE MINISTERS WOULD READILY AGREE TO GIVE UP GENERAL STATEMENTS AND ORGANIZE DEBATE EXCLUSIVELY AROUND AD HOC DEBATE ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS.

5. "HYBRID" APPROACH. ANOTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTION MENTIONED BY LUNS IS A "HYBRID" APPROACH. THIS APPROACH WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THAT IT DID NOT UNDULY LENGTHEN MINISTERIAL MEETINGS. IN THE MISSION'S VIEW, THE KEY TO DEVELOPING THIS FORMAT WOULD BE TO CHANGE THE PROCEDURES FOR DRAFTING THE COMMUNIQUE, SO THAT MINISTERS WOULD NOT NEED TO SPEND BETTER PART OF FINAL HALF-DAY SESSION DISCUSSING TEXTUAL FORMULATIONS.

6. MINISTERS WOULD CONTINUE THE PRACTICE OF DELIVERING GENERAL STATEMENTS, BUT WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO SIMPLY SUBMIT THEM FOR THE RECORD. BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE MORNING SESSION OF THE SECOND DAY, EACH MINISTER WOULD GIVE FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMUNIQUE DRAFTING COMMITTEE ON THE REMAINING DISPUTED POINTS IN THE TEXT. THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE WOULD RECONVENE AND MAKE A FINAL EFFORT TO REMOVE MOST OR ALL OF THE BRACKETS SO THAT AT THE END OF THE MORNING SESSION MINISTERS COULD REVIEW A TEXT WITH FEW OR NO BRACKETS. MINISTERS COULD THEN USE MOST OF THE MORNING SESSION FOR UNSTRUCTURED DEBATE ON SPECIFIC POINTS SOME OF WHICH COULD BE IDENTIFIED IN ADVANCE.

7. PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH LUNS DOES NOT MENTION PARTICIPATION IN HIS PAPER, WASHINGTON MIGHT WISH TO GIVE THIS QUESTION FURTHER CONSIDERATION. IN PAST YEARS DEFENSE MINISTERS AND SOME FINANCE MINISTERS JOINED FOREIGN MINISTERS AT THE COUNCIL MINISTERIALS IN THE FALL. THE TREND IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN TOWARDS DIMINISHING ATTENDANCE BY DEFENSE AND FINANCE MINISTERS. PARTICULARLY IF WASHINGTON FAVORS THE "HYBRID" FORMAT PROPOSED ABOVE, WHICH WOULD OPEN THE WAY TO MORE NUMEROUS INTERVENTIONS BY MINISTERS, THE U.S. MIGHT BE ABLE TO STIMULATE RENEWED INTEREST IN ATTENDANCE BY DEFENSE AND FINANCE MINISTERS. THEIR PRESENCE WOULD, OF COURSE, LEND A WIDER DIMENSION TO THE MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS AND SYMBOLIZE A GREATER WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE EUROPEAN ALLIES TO SHARE MORE OF THE BURDEN OF MAINTAINING ALLIANCE DEFENSES.

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